

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

Claims 1 to 14. (Canceled).

15. (Currently Amended) A fuel injector for fuel injection systems of internal combustion engines, comprising:

a solenoid;

a valve closing member;

a valve needle adapted to be acted upon in a closing direction by a return spring to actuate the valve closing member, which, together with a valve seat surface, forms a sealing seat;

an armature connected to the valve needle in a ~~friction-locked~~ non-friction-locked manner;

a first guide sleeve connected to the valve needle; and

a second guide sleeve,

wherein the valve needle is connected to the second guide sleeve in a friction-locked manner; ~~[[and]]~~

wherein the ~~[[an]]~~ armature is situated between the first guide sleeve and the second guide sleeve such that it can move freely in an axial direction~~[[,]]~~;

wherein the armature has a central opening whose diameter is greater than the diameter of the valve needle~~[[,]]~~; and

wherein the armature has radial play with respect to the valve needle.

16. (Previously Presented) The fuel injector according to Claim 15, wherein the first guide sleeve is situated on a supply-side face of the armature, and the second guide sleeve is situated on a discharge-side face of the armature.

17. (Currently Amended) ~~[[The]]~~ A fuel injector according to Claim 15, for fuel injection systems of internal combustion engines, comprising:

a solenoid;

a valve closing member;

a valve needle adapted to be acted upon in a closing direction by a return spring to actuate the valve closing member, which, together with a valve seat surface, forms a sealing seat;

an armature connected to the valve needle in a non-friction-locked manner;

a first guide sleeve connected to the valve needle; and

a second guide sleeve;

wherein the valve needle is connected to the second guide sleeve in a friction-locked manner;

wherein the armature is situated between the first guide sleeve and the second guide sleeve such that it can move freely in an axial direction;

wherein the armature has a central opening whose diameter is greater than the diameter of the valve needle;

wherein the armature has radial play with respect to the valve needle; and

wherein the first guide sleeve and the second guide sleeve are welded to the valve needle.

18. (Currently Amended) ~~[[The]]~~ A fuel injector according to Claim 15, for fuel injection systems of internal combustion engines, comprising:

a solenoid;

a valve closing member;

a valve needle adapted to be acted upon in a closing direction by a return spring to actuate the valve closing member, which, together with a valve seat surface, forms a sealing seat;

an armature connected to the valve needle in a non-friction-locked manner;

a first guide sleeve connected to the valve needle; and

a second guide sleeve;

wherein the valve needle is connected to the second guide sleeve in a friction-locked manner;

wherein the armature is situated between the first guide sleeve and the second guide sleeve such that it can move freely in an axial direction;

wherein the armature has a central opening whose diameter is greater than the diameter of the valve needle;

wherein the armature has radial play with respect to the valve needle; and

wherein the return spring is supported on the first guide sleeve.

19. (Previously Presented) The fuel injector according to Claim 15, wherein the valve needle protrudes through the armature via the central opening.

20. (Currently Amended) ~~[[The]]~~ A fuel injector according to Claim 15, for fuel injection systems of internal combustion engines, comprising:

a solenoid;

a valve closing member;

a valve needle adapted to be acted upon in a closing direction by a return spring to actuate the valve closing member, which, together with a valve seat surface, forms a sealing seat;

an armature connected to the valve needle in a non-friction-locked manner;

a first guide sleeve connected to the valve needle; and

a second guide sleeve;

wherein the valve needle is connected to the second guide sleeve in a friction-locked manner;

wherein the armature is situated between the first guide sleeve and the second guide sleeve such that it can move freely in an axial direction;

wherein the armature has a central opening whose diameter is greater than the diameter of the valve needle;

wherein the armature has radial play with respect to the valve needle; and

wherein the valve needle is rotationally mounted in the sealing seat.

21. (Previously Presented) The fuel injector according to Claim 20, wherein the valve needle is axially symmetric.

22. (Currently Amended) ~~[[The]]~~ A fuel injector according to Claim 16, for fuel injection systems of internal combustion engines, comprising:

a solenoid;

a valve closing member;

a valve needle adapted to be acted upon in a closing direction by a return spring to actuate the valve closing member, which, together with a valve seat surface, forms a sealing seat;

an armature connected to the valve needle in a non-friction-locked manner;

a first guide sleeve connected to the valve needle; and

a second guide sleeve;

wherein the valve needle is connected to the second guide sleeve in a friction-locked manner;

wherein the armature is situated between the first guide sleeve and the second guide sleeve such that it can move freely in an axial direction;

wherein the armature has a central opening whose diameter is greater than the diameter of the valve needle;

wherein the armature has radial play with respect to the valve needle;

wherein the first guide sleeve is situated on a supply-side face of the armature, and the second guide sleeve is situated on a discharge-side face of the armature; and

wherein a first gap exists between the supply-side face of the armature and the first guide sleeve.

23. (Previously Presented) The fuel injector according to Claim 22, wherein a second gap exists between the discharge-side face of the armature and the second guide sleeve.

24. (Currently Amended) ~~[[The]] A fuel injector according to Claim 15, for fuel injection systems of internal combustion engines, comprising:~~

a solenoid;

a valve closing member;

a valve needle adapted to be acted upon in a closing direction by a return spring to actuate the valve closing member, which, together with a valve seat surface, forms a sealing seat;

an armature connected to the valve needle in a non-friction-locked manner;

a first guide sleeve connected to the valve needle; and

a second guide sleeve;

wherein the valve needle is connected to the second guide sleeve in a friction-locked manner;

wherein the armature is situated between the first guide sleeve and the second guide sleeve such that it can move freely in an axial direction;

wherein the armature has a central opening whose diameter is greater than the diameter of the valve needle;

wherein the armature has radial play with respect to the valve needle; and

wherein the guide sleeves each have a wedge-shaped surface.

25. (Previously Presented) The fuel injector according to Claim 24, wherein the wedge-shaped surfaces face the armature.

26. (Previously Presented) The fuel injector according to Claim 25, wherein a first wedge-shaped elevation on the supply-side face of the armature matches the wedge-shaped surface of the first guide sleeve.

27. (Previously Presented) The fuel injector according to Claim 25, wherein a second wedge-shaped elevation on the discharge-side face of the armature matches the wedge-shaped surface of the second guide sleeve.

28. (Previously Presented) The fuel injector according to Claim 25, wherein the armature has elevations which are one of a crown and a spherical cap.

29. (New) A fuel injector for fuel injection systems of internal combustion engines, comprising:

- a solenoid;

- a valve closing member;

- a valve needle adapted to be acted upon in a closing direction by a return spring to actuate the valve closing member, which, together with a valve seat surface, forms a sealing seat;

- an armature connected to the valve needle in a non-friction-locked manner;

- a first guide sleeve connected to the valve needle; and

- a second guide sleeve for the armature,

- wherein the valve needle is connected to the second guide sleeve in a friction-locked manner;

- wherein the armature is situated between the first guide sleeve and the second guide sleeve such that it can move freely in an axial direction as limited by the first guide sleeve and the second guide sleeve;

- wherein the armature has a central opening whose diameter is greater than the diameter of the valve needle; and

- wherein the armature has radial play with respect to the valve needle.